35

Richard Dutton, 15 Cherry St.

Dec. 8th.

#7

Richard Dutton

admitted March 15th 1820

Tobacco

On Tetanus from Wounds.

Tetanic complaints have been divided into two kinds - Idiopathic and Symptomatic, the latter is by far the most common in our climate, and has the higher claims to our consideration. The different species, which Nosologists have distinguished; viz: Obisthotonos, Emprosthotonos, &c. being but one, and the same disease, in different grades of violence or situation, I shall not notice. Such systematic refinements having, I believe, become almost obsolete.

Wounds, on any part of the body, may produce Tetanus, but the most liable, are those of the scalp, the hands or the feet: they may be either incised, contused, lacerated or punctured; but more frequently the latter.

The symptoms may appear at an indefinite length of time from the reception of the injury, until the wound has entirely healed. If the wound has proceeded to inflammation, suppuration or granulation, the first warning that the patient has of his approaching danger, is the unhealthy aspect of his sore. If it was inflamed and painful, the pain and inflammation seems to have subsided, without any evident cause; if suppuration had supervened, instead of a laudable pus, there is frequently a discharge of a thin white appearance; if granulations have arisen, they appear soft, and of a pallid hue. About this time, there is an indescribable uneasiness of the system generally; with lassitude and indisposition to exercise; soon after, a sense of rigidity arises in the back part of the neck, with pain, extending downwards. As the rigidity increases, deglutition becomes difficult, attended

with uneasiness about the root of the tongue. Whilst this is going on, a violent pain frequently commences at the scrobiculus cordis, of a nature not easily described; which sometimes extends into the back, attended with rigidity of the muscles of the thorax. At this time the lower jaw becomes obstinately fixed; and the muscles of the face, assume what has been denominated the cynic smile. Now also, if the disease is going to be violent, the muscles of the back become affected with spasmodic rigidity, drawing the head forcibly backwards; sometimes the spasms extend down the lower extremities, and the patient, when lying on his back, is thrown upwards, forming a curve, resting only on his head and heels. The disease may now be said to have fully formed; the spasms recur every two or three minutes, especially, if there be any noise or disturbance about the patient; or, frequently if only liquids be offered; in this respect, resembling

Hydrophobia. The pulse, in the commencement, is frequently full and strong; but, as the disease advances, it generally diminishes, or assumes an action lower than that of nature. The bowels are universally slow. There is often a febrile appearance of the tongue.

The disease continuing, sometimes the spasms of the muscles of the lower jaw, and those of the thorax, seem to be diminished in energy, or go entirely off; whilst those of the back and neck become more violent, or, others, which were before not affected, take on the spasmodic action; as those of the abdomen and larynx. Suffocation arises, with great anxiety and distress, and thus, or with one universal convulsion, the wretched sufferer finds relief in the arms of death.

Seeing that all those effects are produced, in consequence of a wound received, we are naturally led to inquire into the proximate

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible] — [illegible] the [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible] the [illegible] the [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible] &c.

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

I greatly suspect, that, they have been prescribed in the forming stage, and thus, they have quelled it, by overcoming its yet feeble action, with their more powerful impression: nearly in the same manner, that Doctr. Chapman recommends checking a catarrhal affection; - with this difference, that they increase and support the inflammatory action in the wound.

It might, therefore, be eligible, if called before the disease had become fully developed, to endeavour, by a generous use of wine, brandy or opium, to crush it whilst yet in its infancy. But much of this must be left to, the skill and judgement of, the practitioner. The practice, employed by Doctr. Hartshorne, of this city, by the use of caustic to the back part of the neck, would be very applicable here, if the symptoms continued increasing. And I presume,

great advantage might even arise from the application of a blister along the whole course of the spinal column. But, in all cases, the wound should be opened to the bottom and dressed with the most stimulating articles.
It is unnecessary to enlarge, further, upon the many medicines which have been proposed, and employed in this disease. But, in whatever stage we attack it, or whatever remedies we use, let them be carried to the greatest extent; lest, whilst we are trifling with ordinary quantities, our patient sinks into eternity!

Having, now, brought to a conclusion my Inaugural Thesis, and, as it contains some opinions, which have originated with myself, I submit it, with due deference, to those, who are to decide upon its merits.